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Editorial

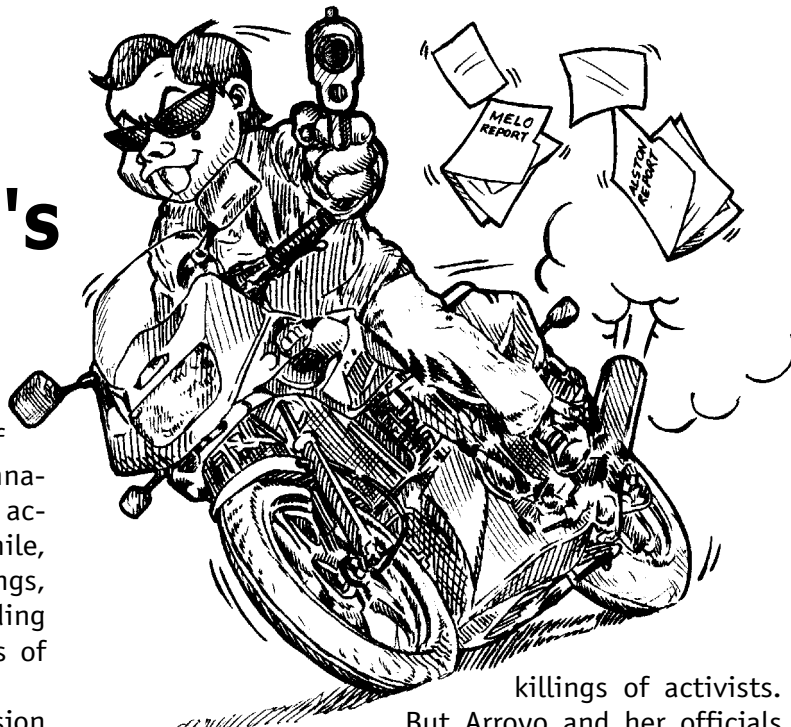
Resolutely resist the Arroyo regime's fascist offensives

Arroyo and her criminal henchmen strive to conceal their bloodied hands in the face of widespread local and international condemnation of the extrajudicial killings and abductions of activists and others opposing her regime. Meanwhile, the military insists that it is not behind the killings, and continues instead to justify attacks by branding progressive forces as "communists" and "enemies of the state."

Fascist repression is worsening and the expansion of the state's fascist machinery is proceeding posthaste. Arroyo wants to completely crush the democratic and progressive forces, repress all protests and exterminate all those who oppose her power.

As soon as this bogus, rotten and repressive regime assumed power, it launched an all-out war against the revolutionary and progressive forces. It launched in 2001 Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL), a counter-insurgency plan that featured hunting down and killing leaders and members of the legal democratic movement and suspected supporters of the revolution. In the face of the upsurge in strength of the revolutionary movement and people's protests, the regime is implementing a new and more vicious version of OBL and is exacerbating its campaign of political killings.

The Alston Mission castigated the Arroyo regime for branding as "enemies of the state" the legal progressive forces, and linked this to the current wave of



killings of activists.
But Arroyo and her officials
persist in this practice.

The armed personnel of the AFP and PNP go through ideological and political indoctrination under Malacañang and the AFP's chief fascists and clerico-fascist instructors. The notion that there is no difference between armed revolutionaries and unarmed activists, and that both are therefore legitimate targets for armed attacks is seared into the brains of soldiers and policemen. Failing to defeat the armed revolutionary forces, the state's armed forces are now primarily targeting suspected revolutionary supporters and those in the legal and parliamentary fronts.

Simultaneously, the Arroyo regime is pushing forward with various "legal offensives" to slander, destroy and intimidate open and legal progressive parties and organizations and deny them any opportunity to participate in legal and parliamentary struggle. Concurrently, the regime churns out more fascist laws

***This issue's
highlights...***

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and exacerbates its repressive methods of governance.

In their "legal offensives," the fascist Arroyo regime and the AFP persist in linking the progressive forces to the armed revolutionary movement to justify and create conditions in setting them up as targets for fascist attack, repression and extermination.

These "legal offensives" include the calibrated preemptive response, the no permit-no rally policy, the revival of the Marcos dictatorship's Batas Pambansa 880, EO 464 and its replacement Memorandum Circular 108, the National ID System, the quasi-martial law Presidential Proclamation 1017 and its corollary General Orders. Arroyo wanted to impose martial law in February 2006 but held back because of lack of support.

An anti-terrorism law was passed and signed last March 6, formally giving legal justification for the various means of trampling on human and civil rights. Essentially, the provisions of this law are almost the same as martial law.

All Arroyo needs now is charter change to fully institutionalize fascist and pro-imperialist policies.

Malacañang and AFP hellbent on booting out progressive parties from Congress

The US-Arroyo regime is exerting all legal and extralegal means to prevent a repeat victory by progressive parties in the coming election and finally deny them access to the already narrow front for legal and parliamentary struggles.

The regime is apprehensive that progressive parties will continue to gain support and increase the number of their representatives in Congress. Arroyo fears that they would become an even more effective force in the people's struggle and the movement to oust her from power.

The AFP and PNP are closely coordinating at all levels to ensure the implementation of the US-Arroyo regime's plan against progressive parties. This is old news. But now the regime is utilizing all AFP and PNP units and is implementing plans contained in the documents "Special SOT Project: Counter Party-list at the Barangay Council (12 months implementation)" and "CPP-NPA-NDF Party list Operations for 2004 Elections."

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Expect her to pursue this after the May election.

As the election approaches, Malacañang is heightening its "legal offensive" against progressive parties. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales continually calls them "communist fronts" and incessantly subjects them to harassment.

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Aside from the armed revolutionary movement, Arroyo considers progressive parties such as Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party a huge obstacle to her continued stay in power. They lead the party-list election in Congress and remain firm and effective columns of the anti-Arroyo forces in Congress and the parliament of the streets.

The intensification of the regime's political killings, "legal offensives" and other fascist attacks do not signify true power. In fact, these are all indicators that the ruling regime is isolated and desperate due to the strong and broad resistance of an irate people.

The revolutionary movement, the patriotic and democratic parties and organizations as well as the entire nation must unrelentingly resist the fascist offensives of the ruling regime. The struggle must continue until the regime is dismantled and Arroyo, her henchmen and her executioners are punished. **AB**



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AFP against Bayan Muna et. al.

The military is intensifying its harassment operations against progressive parties such as Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party and Kabataan Party.

These AFP operations are concentrated in 305 cities and town centers where progressive party leaders and organizers are being arrested and portrayed as CPP cadres. People are banned from attending rallies and protest actions launched by progressive groups. Aside from this, the AFP also launches operations to prevent progressive parties and candidates from campaigning, intimidate the people, harass campaign personnel and continue political killings.

AFP documents clearly state that its forces will actively participate in the political warfare arena against those who they call "partners of the CPP-NPA." This is a glaring violation of the military's supposed neutrality during elections.

The documents also call for "counter-organizing" or establish-

ing sham groups that will be used against progressive parties to confuse the people by using counter-revolutionary and anti-communist groups to discuss issues raised by democratic organizations. AFP documents clearly state that military forces should campaign for "friendly" parties such as Akbayan, ABA-AKO, COOP-NATCO, Akapin, TUCP and others. Aside from these, the AFP is also campaigning for rabid fascist and anti-communist parties ANAD and AKSA.

AFP personnel will be used to campaign and vote en masse for their selected parties and candidates. Soldiers have been ordered to register in droves in rural and urban precincts that are strongholds of progressive parties.

Militarization of bastions of political opponents

Since November 2006, more than 250 soldiers have been deployed in urban poor and workers' communities in the National Capital Region (NCR) which are suspected strongholds of progressive parties. These soldiers under Lt. Col. Ricardo Visaya are trained in Civil-Military Operations.

According to AFP NCR Command chief Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, these military units have been deployed to counteract progressive parties and organizations, including human rights advocacy groups. The AFP declared the blatantly fascist objective of crushing those

who advocate in these communities the "culture of rebelling and fighting the government and resort-

ing to the parliament of the streets."

Military units are currently deployed in the barangays of Parola, Isla Puting Bato and Del Pan in Tondo and in barangays of Sta.

Mesa, Manila; in the barangays of Commonwealth, Payatas and Bagong Silang in Quezon City; likewise in many barangays in Caloocan City. There are reports that military units have taken positions in urban poor communities in Cebu, Davao and other leading cities.

Aside from military patrols, there is worsening harassment in these communities. Cases of illegal arrest and detention and other forms of human rights violations have risen. Soldiers threatened to kill Bayan Muna (BM) member Alberto Corbes last February 26 if he continues to campaign for BM. Three days later, unidentified men tore down the door of his house and hurled stones at him.

Checkpoints have been set up in Payatas and teams of soldiers visit the homes of Kabataan Party members. Three youths have been called to the military detachment and interrogated about their activities in the community.

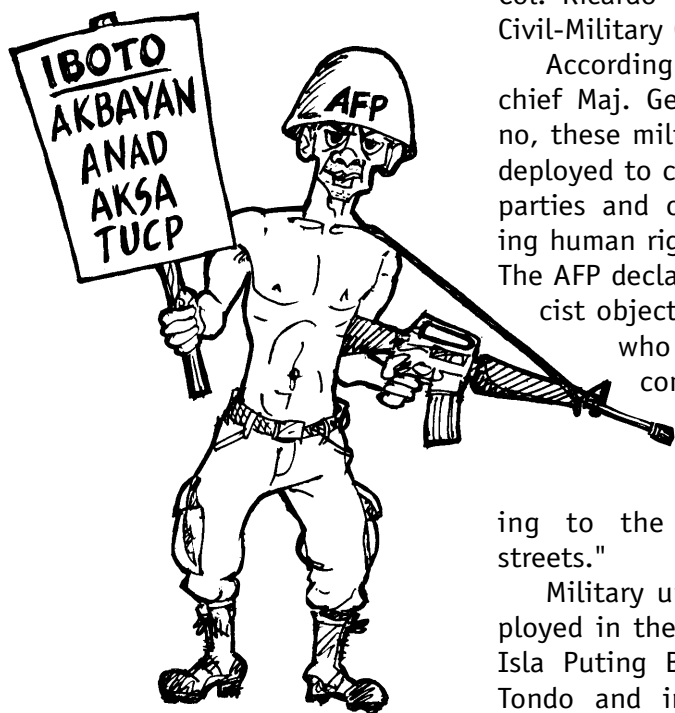
In Negros, the military and the bandit group RPA-ABB continually harass leaders and members of BM, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party and Kabataan Party in various communities.

Military forces are doing exactly the same thing in thousands of rural communities, especially those suspected of being strongholds of the revolutionary movement and the progressive parties and organizations.

Disqualification tactic

The abovementioned AFP documents cite the filing of disqualification charges as one of the main means of harassing progressive parties.

Two separate disqualification charges against BM, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party have been filed at the Comelec. The AFP used two hooded and paid witnesses



from Nueva Ecija to accuse as masterminds behind the killings of their husbands Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Liza Maza. This ploy was cooked up by the Inter-Agency Legal Action Group under National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to hamper the campaign efforts of the accused parties.

Arroyo personally ordered her newly appointed Presidential Legal Adviser Sergio Apostol to connive with the AFP and file many other charges with the Comelec with the objective of withdrawing accreditation from BM, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party.

AB

Kontra Daya to watch over the election

Kontra Daya, an electoral watchdog group for the May election was formed last February 23. Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona led the formation of Kontra Daya. It includes representatives from the Ecumenical Bishops Forum, Computer Professionals Union, Concerned Artists of the Philippines, TxtPower, Doctors and Nurses for Clean and Credible Elections, Sinag, Bayan, UP Academic Employees Union, Agham and Alliance of Concerned Teachers.

According to Kontra Daya, the Arroyo regime has the capability to commit massive electoral fraud in May because it has the resources, and it has a history and strong motivation to do it. Kontra Daya will guard against the use of government funds and resources, funds from gambling and other illegal activities, and AFP and police interference in the election.

AFP, Arroyo behind Palparan candidacy

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol ardently support former Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan's intent to run in the coming election. Esperon expressed hopes that Palparan would win as a party-list candidate and said he would mobilize the armed forces to protect the votes of Arroyo's favorite butcher. Apostol criticized those who oppose Palparan's candidacy and said that Palparan is qualified to run for election.

Palparan might run as a nominee of the anti-communist group ANAD. Meanwhile, another fascist, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales announced his candidacy for congressman of Bataan's second district.

Melo and Alston Reports

The AFP is behind the series of extrajudicial killings

Communist Party of the Philippines

February 28, 2007



The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) takes note of the positive points in the Melo Commission report and the initial findings of the Alston Mission into the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country.

The two separate reports vary with regard to the depth of investigation, sharpness of analysis and level of conclusions, but are one in confirming the phenomenal spate of political extrajudicial killings targeting activists and members of progressive and democratic organizations and in concluding that the killings are principally the handiwork of elements of the state's armed forces. This, despite the limitations faced by both investigation bodies—more especially so on the part of the Melo Commission.

Both reports concluded that the killings have been conditioned into the mindset of the military. The Melo report found that the victims "were almost entirely members of activist groups or were media personnel... (whose killings were) pursuant to an orchestrated plan by a group or sector with an interest in eliminating the victims." It noted how the military considers legal Left-leaning forces as "enemies of the state" who should be "neutralized." The Alston report, on the other hand, found the high num-

ber of extrajudicial killings "distressing" and went further in pinning the blame on a "counter-insurgency" program that targets the suspected mass base and legal Leftist structures and includes a campaign by the military to vilify and intimidate progressive organizations. All this, said, Alston, had the combined effect of culminating in the extrajudicial killings of Leftist leaders, members and supporters.

Both reports likewise tore to shreds claims by the Arroyo regime and its top security and military officials that the ongoing extrajudicial killings are part of an internal purge within the revolutionary movement.

The Alston report dismissed AFP claims that the figures presented by Karapatan, Bayan Muna and other organizations are fabrications and products of mere propaganda by "communist fronts," and that the reason for the rise in the killings lies in purges committed by the CPP-NPA. The report noted that if there was any fabrication at all, clearly it was the supposed "internal document of the CPP" presented by the AFP as "evidence" of a "purge." The Alston report summarily dismissed the purported "Oplan Bushfire" document as "(bearing) all the hallmarks of a fabrication and cannot be taken as evidence of anything other than disinformation." The Melo report, on the other hand, pointed to the self-contradictoriness of the military's simultaneous insistence on its "purge" theory and claims that the victims were "enemies of the state." It even found "more telling" that General Palparan himself does not believe this "purge" theory and is even skeptical of reports about

this. The Melo report also noted that none of the victims, their families or witnesses has been taken into the AFP's fold or sought military protection.

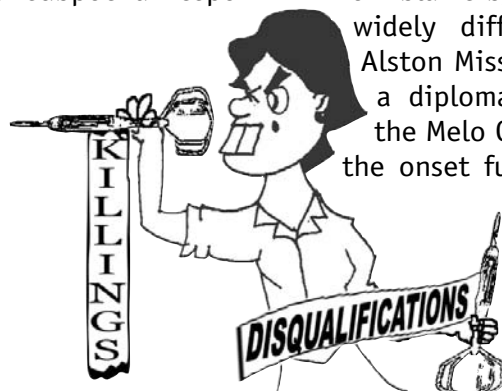
Notwithstanding the facts of this being the Alston Mission's initial visit to the country, the very brief period of its investigation, the efforts of the Arroyo regime to restrict its movements and prevent access to victims and human rights organizations, plus government and military hostility to its presence, it was able to come up with a report whose quality was far superior to that of the Melo Commission. It outclassed the Melo Commission in terms of the depth of its investigation, the rapport it gained with the victims' relatives, witnesses and human rights workers, the genuine sympathy it developed with the plight of those it interviewed, the insights it gained and the consequent sharpness of the conclusions it arrived at. Given the Alston Mission's initial findings on the spate of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, we anticipate his final report to be even more incisive and critical.

On the other hand, from its very inception, the Melo Commission suffered the encumbrances of being a creature of Malacañang intended to cover up the Arroyo regime's responsibility for the killings. It lacked independence, was wanting in funds and resources and was not imbued with powers to subpoena respon-

dents, protect witnesses and render criminal convictions. Most of all, it failed to gain the confidence of the victims' families and human rights organizations and admittedly relied mainly on testimonies of the military. Yet it could not dismiss the facts and stark reality of the armed forces perpetrating the killings. Even just the testimonies, documents, statements and justifications presented by the military were obvious in their self-incrimination as well as falsehoods.

The Melo Commission assumed "a certain degree of certitude in stating that, in all probability, some elements in the military, among whom is suspected to be General Palparan, are responsible for the recent killings of activists." The Melo report also went on to say that some of the general's superiors "may be held responsible for failing to prevent, punish or condemn the killings under the principle of command responsibility." However, the report virtually stopped at confining responsibility for the killings on individual soldiers and officers, saying that "the killings are certainly not attributable to the military organization itself or the state, but only to individuals or groups acting pursuant to their own interests" and, further, "that the circumstantial evidence presented before it... are probably grossly inadequate to support a criminal conviction."

Arroyo herself has been spared from blame by the two reports for widely different reasons—the Alston Mission wanted to avoid a diplomatic quandary, while the Melo Commission was from the onset full of praises for Arroyo and pulled punches to avoid hitting its creator. Both reports did point out, nevertheless, that it is



the regime's policies—particularly that of vilifying progressive organizations, labeling them as "communist fronts" and excluding them from the legal arena of struggle—that ultimately serve as the matrix for the killings. The Alston Mission delved even deeper into national policies that fundamentally sanction the killings, including a "counter-insurgency" program that targets the suspected mass base and the legal Leftist structures, and other antidemocratic policies and measures to evade executive accountability such as Malacañang's Executive Order 464 and Memorandum Circular 108.

Arroyo is, for a fact, the mastermind and overall director of these fascist attacks. She is the highest-placed individual responsible for the brutal, antipeople Internal Security Operational Plan Bantay Laya and its current extension which mainly and specifically targets suspected supporters of the revolutionary movement and the visible, legal national democratic movement as a way of indirectly attacking the "invisible" armed revolutionary forces. Arroyo herself has actively engaged in anticommunist witchhunts against the legal Left by labeling Bayan and Karapatan and kindred democratic organizations as "communist front organizations," marking them as targets of military attack and political elimination. She has given her clerico-fascist national security adviser Norberto Gonzales and other top security and military officials a free hand to engage in anticommunist witchhunting. She repeatedly and unabashedly praises Gen. Jovito Palparan and his unbridled cruel attacks against revolutionary mass bases as "counter-insurgency" models for emulation by the entire AFP.

Despite the release of the two damning reports, Arroyo continues

Victims reply to Melo Commission charges

"Don't blame the victims!" Thus replied the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) after the Melo Commission castigated the victims, their families and friends for refusing to participate in its investigation. According to Bayan Secretary-General Renato Reyes, it was not the lack of participation of individuals and organizations that led to the commission's weak and totally unacceptable report, but the narrow and questionable framework the commission used to determine the root causes of the extrajudicial killings. It intentionally disregarded the regime's prevailing and fascist programs, especially Oplan Bantay Laya that targets suspected mass bases of the revolutionary movement.

According to United Nations Special Rapporteur Prof. Philip Alston, the refusal of the victims' families and their supporters to testify before the commission is understandable. He said the commission failed to do enough to elicit their testimonies and even insulted the families by coercing them to seek the "protection" of the regime's armed forces who are the primary suspects in the killings.

Meanwhile, in a pretended show of seriousness to resolve the killings, Arroyo announced last March 5 the formation of 99 special courts to hear cases of extrajudicial killings. Bayan challenged the Arroyo regime to file charges against retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, whom the Melo Commission pointed out as one of the perpetrators of the killings.

AB

to insist on clearing her armed forces of fault, covering up their crimes and trying to shift the blame on the revolutionary movement. The Arroyo regime and the AFP are as incorrigible and relentless as before in their frenzied campaign against the open, legal progressive organizations. They continue to dispatch death squads to physically eliminate their perceived enemies and complement such physical violence with "legal offensives" to negate or minimize the effective participation of these "communist front organizations" and "enemies of the state" in the legal arena.

The CPP holds Gloria Arroyo directly responsible for the campaign of extrajudicial killings against progressive organizations and parties. She bears responsibility not only as commander-in-chief of the

AFP, but as the highest authority behind its armed forces' "counter-insurgency" program that aims "to drain the pond in order to catch the fish" and as chief executive and superior of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) which plans, directs and coordinates the two-pronged campaign of physical elimination (or extrajudicial killings) and political elimination (or legal offensive) against the patriotic and democratic movement.

In its latest rabid anti-Left maneuver, Arroyo has instructed her presidential legal adviser to collude with the AFP and the COMELEC to work out the possible disqualification of Bayan Muna and other progressive parties and thus cripple the participation of these

Continued on "Melo..." on page 7

On the occasion of the 99th International Women's Day

Celebrate the victories of the Philippine women's movement!

Filipino women are celebrating this year significant victories in the advancement of their welfare and interests. Thousands of women are expected to take to the streets in various parts of the country to highlight these victories and affirm their determination to continue their struggle despite the US-Arroyo regime's unabated campaign of repression.

Makibaka (Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan) spokesperson Ka Aleta Alvino said it is but right to celebrate the victories of the women's movement against the US-Arroyo regime's pro-imperialist, exploitative, repressive and antipeople policies. Ka Aleta emphasized the large-scale participation of women in the fight against the regime's push for charter change, the dismissal of impeachment charges against Arroyo and many more.

The women's movement showed strength and determination despite

the unparalleled hardship and suffering brought upon them and their families by the Arroyo regime's all-out war, fascist killings and terrorism.

Ka Aleta condemned the Arroyo regime's unabated violence against women. Since 2001, 83 women, mostly from various women's organizations, have been killed. Twenty women were killed last year. Fifty four of those killed were children. Meanwhile, 33 women are among the 150 desaparecidos. There are hundreds of mothers who have lost their children, wives who have lost husbands, and children who have lost fathers and brothers.

Women are among those who lead the organization of victims' relatives who are determined to make the US-Arroyo regime pay for its crimes. They have bravely defended human rights, exposed the regime's crimes and called out for justice.



Ka Aleta added that the Arroyo regime is indiscriminate in its oppression of women and the rest of the Filipino people. She noted that even the women's sectoral representative in Congress was seriously harassed. In February 2006, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, along with five other progressive party representatives was charged with rebellion. Maza and the rest had to reside for two months inside the Batasan Complex to evade arrest. Despite this, the people's representatives did not back down. Ka Aleta praised Maza for defying Malacañang's dictate to remain in the Batasan Complex when she traveled to the Senate to witness the signing of a bill she sponsored. Not long afterwards, the state had no choice but to release the "Batasan 5."

Ka Aleta considers as a major victory for Filipino women the conviction in a local court of the American soldier who raped "Nicole." Women's organizations stood by

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"Melo..." from on page 6

organizations in the legal and parliamentary arena.

And in a desperate effort to undermine the Alston and Melo reports, Arroyo has directed her top Cabinet, security and military officials to go on a rampage to malign these investigative bodies. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has been especially vicious, saying that Alston came with "a preconditioned mind" and was "brainwashed by the Leftists." AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said that "If anyone was in denial, it was Alston." General Palparan has charged that the Melo Commission was "infiltrated by the enemy."

Despite Gloria Arroyo's protestations of innocence in the extrajudicial killings of activists and efforts to sweep the evidence under the rug, the verdict is clear. Her hands are stained with the blood of an unprecedented number of victims of extrajudicial killings in the country. Their cry for justice resounds. The Filipino people rightfully demand that she and her henchmen be held accountable for their role in these murders, in the shameless effort to cover up these dastardly crimes and in the continuing massacres, abductions and brutal suppression of the people's struggle for national and social liberation. **AB**



Party cadre summarily executed in Leyte

AB's latest tally of heinous political killings includes the summary execution by the military of a captured Party cadre in Leyte. An Anakpawis leader was also killed in Davao del Sur as part of the intensifying harassment of progressive parties as the election approaches.

March 2. Two assassins killed Renato Torrecampo Pacaide, 53, Anakpawis provincial coordinator and secretary-general of the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Davao del Sur. Pacaide was gunned down in in Digos City. He was the 79th victim of political killings in Southern Mindanao since 2001. His killers fled aboard a motorcycle.

February 25. Elements of the 19th IB based in Kananga, Leyte arrested and summarily executed Antonio Ramos, secretary of the Northern Leyte guerrilla front. Ramos was arrested in a military checkpoint in Barangay Olutan, Jaro, Leyte. He was aboard a military truck bound for Kananga when he was repeatedly shot by the arresting soldiers. The AFP justified the killing with a fabricated tale that Ramos was trying to escape.

February 20. Two assassins

tried to kill Menoncio "Bebe" Panhay, 62, member of the Misamis Oriental Farmers Association (MOFA), an affiliate organization of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, in Barangay Bunal, Salay, Misamis Oriental.

The fascist criminals who pretended to be poultry buyers shot Panhay who was only hit in the foot and able to flee to his house. The assailants gave chase to Panhay but were driven away by his wife who was armed with a machete. The criminals fled towards a nearby military camp. Panhay is now in hiding due to continuing threats to his life.

February 19. Two fascist butchers shot dead Hernani Pastolero, 64, DXCM (University of Mindanao Broadcasting Network) broadcaster and current editor of the *Lightning Courier*. Pastolero was instantly killed by two bullets to the back of his head inside his house in Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan at 6:30 a.m. He was the leader of a local group of residents fighting for the right to own the land their houses are built on.

February 4. Elements of the Internal Security Unit (ISU) trailed

Ricky Palencia, head of COURAGE-Eastern Visayas all the way from the Leyte Metropolitan Waterworks Department (LMWD) Motorpool in Nulatula, Tacloban City to the LMWD main office. One of Palencia's shadows who was arrested was recognized by witnesses as the triggerman in the summary execution of LMWD union leader Sammy Bandilla last October 15, 2004. Palencia is included in the military's hitlist.

January 26. Elements of the Philippine Army and the bandit group Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade have been harassing leaders and members of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party and Kabataan Party in various parts of Negros Occidental. In Barangays Orong and Hilamonan, Kabankalan City, elements of the 61st IB conducted zoning operations to terrorize residents supporting progressive parties. In Himamaylan City and Hinobaan town, residents were ordered not to vote for progressive parties. Achilles Yonson, organizer of the militant National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) was threatened by a Sergeant Abay of the 61st IB. AB

"Celebrate..." from page 7

Nicole during her fight for justice, defended her from attacks against her credibility and from the Arroyo regime's attempts to discredit her if not bribe her and her family. With the help of her supporters, Nicole remained absolutely steadfast. Her victory was celebrated by women and the entire nation. Nicole, her family, lawyers and supporters are determined to continue with the fight after the US and the Arroyo regime disregarded the sentence imposed by the court.

Nicole's victory is a small part of a bigger chal-

lenge—for women and the entire nation—to resist the Visiting Forces Agreement, US military intervention in the country and unequal relations between US imperialism and the Philippines. Ka Aleta said these are just a few of the many victories won by the women's movement in the past year. They show women's determination and militancy in advancing the interest and welfare of the nation. Local and national demands and standpoints aired by women can no longer be simply ignored. Their strength reflects the growing role of women, especially the women proletariat, in the nation's politics, culture and economy.

Surface and release Leo Velasco!

The Communist party of the Philippines (CPP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) strongly condemn the US-Arroyo regime's security forces for their illegal and cowardly abduction of Leo Velasco. The CPP and the NDFP demand that the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) immediately surface and release Velasco, a member of the CPP Central Committee and NDFP consultant for the peace talks.

According to witnesses, Velasco was arrested at about 10:30 a.m. on February 19 at the corner of Yacapin and Aguinaldo Streets in Cagayan de Oro City. He was dragged into an L300 van with license plate LVC-513. Bystanders attempted to prevent the abduction but the assailants claimed to be government personnel and members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

The military and police continue to deny having abducted Velasco despite numerous witnesses to the incident. The commander of the 4th ID based in the city has denied any knowledge of the incident.

The CPP and the NDFP strongly demand that the US-Arroyo regime respect the rights of Velasco under international humanitarian law and the rules of war, as well as under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) of 1995 and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) of 1998.

The CARHRIHL and JASIG are agreements between the NDFP and the GRP that remain valid despite the suspension of formal peace

talks. Under the JASIG, Velasco cannot be arrested because he is an NDFP consultant. It is the obligation of the Arroyo regime to surface and immediately release him.

The United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID) was furnished a copy of NDFP Chief Peace Negotiator Luis Jalandoni's letter to Gloria Arroyo that strongly protested the abduction of Velasco and pointed out that Gloria Arroyo, being commander-in-chief of the government's armed forces, is ultimately responsible for the abduction. In reply, the UNWGEID sent an outline that needs to be filled in by the NDFP to start the investigation of Velasco's abduction, as well as those of other NDFP consultants and staff and their families.

According to the CPP, Velasco's friends and relatives are fearful that he might suffer the same fate as other CPP cadres and members and even leaders and members of the legal democratic movement who have been tortured and killed. The CPP and the NDFP are well

aware that it is a policy of the US-Arroyo regime to summarily execute those arrested by the AFP, especially those they believe are officials of the CPP, NDFP and NPA.

Last year, ten NDFP consultants and members were abducted and have yet to be surfaced by the AFP. They include the couple Prudencio Calubid and Cecil Palma, one of their relatives and two other NDFP staff who were with them; Rogelio Calubad and his son Gabriel; NDFP staff Leopoldo Ancheta; and former NPA member Philip Limjoco. The NDFP has received reports that they all have been tortured and killed.

The CPP also called on the United Nations Committee on Human Rights, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Committee of the Red Crescent, Philippine human rights organizations, church institutions and other advocates of human rights, civil liberties and the peace process to demand that the US-Arroyo regime immediately surface and release Velasco and other NDFP personnel and their relatives abducted by the military.

AB





Ka Bel suffers more than a year in detention

ANAKPAWIS Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran has been detained for more than a year now on trumped up charges of plotting to destabilize the Arroyo regime. The Arroyo regime continues to ignore widespread local and international calls for Ka Bel's release. Ka Bel has also received the support of many parliamentarians throughout

the world. He is detained at the Philippine Heart Center where he was transferred due to hypertension.

Ka Bel was arrested on rebellion charges by virtue of a warrant issued in 1985. Despite glaring procedural flaws and the obviously fabricated charges filed against him and 40 other

individuals, the court continues to refuse to order Ka Bel's release.

Ka Bel's plight was presented by his wife to UN Special Rapporteur Prof. Philip Alston. From his detention in the Heart Center, Ka Bel joked that he was more certain of Anakpawis' victory in the coming election than his release.

Police harass Bohol fishermen

POLICEMEN and sea wardens shot at poor fishermen in four separate incidents from September to December 2006 in the towns of Carlos P. Garcia, Bien Unido and Talibon in Bohol, according to Pama-lakaya.

Last December 20, policemen on patrol strafed Jasper Cuizon, 15, Emiliano Cabag, Lester Cabag, 9, and Armin Lopez, 16. Cuizon was hit in the thigh and remains bedridden.

Last December 5, sea wardens strafed Carlito Juntilla and four other fishermen near the Danajon Coral Reef Marine Park in Carlos P. Garcia. The shooters have been identified as SP01 Cortes and SP01 Acon of the RMG Region 7.

Last November 16, Richie Abenido, 20, Edward Abenido, 12, and Bolic Quisto were strafed in the same area. Andy Dalanon, 28, and two other fishermen were strafed last September 16 while fishing near the fish sanctuary in Carlos P. Garcia. The shooter was identified as SP01 Leo Aumentad.

The victims were all fired upon for alleged illegal fishing near fish sanctuaries.

AFP violence victimizes Moro civilians

AFP soldiers mercilessly fired upon Moro civilians last February 19, claiming Abdulhakim Abbilul, 14, a student of the Kasambuhan Village Elementary School in Kasambuhan, Indanan, Sulu and Sarri-d Jum-dail, 24 as their latest victims. Abbilul died while Jum-dail was wounded. Both victims were on their way home to Barangay Marang, Indanan when they were fired upon by Scout Rangers undertaking military operations in Barangay Kasambuhan. The military tried to cover up the incident by claiming that the victims were Abu Sayyaf elements, but this was disputed by the victims' relatives.

Meanwhile, thousands of civilians were forced to evacuate from seven barangays of Midsayap, North Cotabato and from Barangay Northern Kabuntalan in nearby Shariff Kabunsuan province last March 5-6 when AFP units pursuing Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas bombarded their communities with howitzers and mortars. The battle was instigated by AFP troops who attacked MILF positions in Barangays Lumupog and Kadigasan in Midsayap. MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said troops of the 6th IB entered the area last March 3 to provide security for US soldiers conducting a medical mission. But the soldiers did not leave after the activity and instead attacked the MILF positions.





NPA metes punishment on RPA-ABB commander in Iloilo

An NPA team under the Napoleon Tumagtang Command in Southern Panay punished a commander of the bandit Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) last February 15.

The RPA-ABB leader was identified as Jose Cabunagan alias "Arce" of Barangay Bacagay, Tigbauan, Iloilo. Cabunagan was the RPA-ABB provincial commander for Iloilo and was involved in several crimes against the people.

The AFP and PNP use the RPA-ABB as death squads that primarily implement political killings. Their operations are part of the US-Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya I and II.

Cabunagan killed barangay official Antonio Camiring in Sitio Baclayan, Barangay Hamog. He was also involved in the killing of several members of progressive groups and peasants in the island.

Bicol NPA ambushes 2 policemen

TWO Philippine National Police (PNP) officials were punished by the NPA in separate operations in Masbate and Sorsogon in the first week of March.

Cipriano Lachica was punished in Barangay Zone 1, Bulan, Sorsogon at about 5:30 p.m. last March 2. Lachica was the former police chief of Magallanes town and deputy police chief of Bulan before he retired in 2006.

Sr. Supt. Alberto Montecalvo, police chief of Pio V. Corpuz town was punished in Barangay Lampuyang of the same town at about 5:00 p.m. last March 1. Seized from Montecalvo were a pistol and other



items.

Montecalvo was punished for his involvement in extrajudicial killings while Lachica was punished for becoming a military intelligence agent after his retirement.

2 soldiers killed in Davao ambush

TWO soldiers were killed after Red fighters ambushed a unit of the Philippine Army 73rd IB in Barangay Eden, Toril, Davao City last February 28. Both soldiers were killed early on in the firefight.

Before this, a trooper from the 67th IB trooper was killed and four others were wounded in an encounter with Red fighters in Sitio Bandira, Barangay Caningag, Caraga, Davao Oriental last February 27.

Expanding US military intervention

The RP-US 2007 Balikatan military exercises held in Sulu from February 19-March 4 and participated in by 400 US Marines and 1,500 Philippine Army troops were used as cover for various forms of US military intervention.

A US military team involved in Fusion Piston joined the Balikatan and met with PNP Region 12 officials to discuss joint operations against drug smuggling in the Mindanao Sea. The US is now using anti-drug operations as a cover to fly unmanned surveillance vehicles and conduct other intelligence activities in the area. Through this, they could conceal their surveillance operations against the NPA in Mindanao and other parts of the country.

The Balikatan also served as cover for the US terror campaign in Sulu through alleged humanitarian projects such as building schoolrooms, clinics, and roads and providing medical services for 14 Moro communities in Mindanao. It also tightened coordination between the AFP and the US in dealing with the Philippines' internal matters. In a statement that indicated US troops' participation in combat operations, Maj. Gen. Stephen Douglas Tom, co-director for the exercise said American troops would not hesitate to fight back "to defend themselves" if attacked by local and foreign terrorists.

NSCB releases deceitful statistics

THE government's National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) released this March deceitful statistics on the minimum amount needed by a family to live a decent life. This is to justify the imminent scrapping of the proposed law for a ₱125 daily wage increase.

According to the NSCB's deceitful statistics, a family of five in Metro Manila will need a mere ₱8,061 monthly or ₱266 daily to live decently. This contradicts earlier government statistics that showed that in 2001, a Metro Manila family of six already needed ₱445.53 for a decent life. This rose to ₱695 daily in 2006 and in 2007, it now stands at ₱750. On the other hand, the minimum daily wage in Metro Manila is pegged at ₱350.

Congress and the Senate approved a bill calling for a ₱125 daily wage hike after six years of lobbying by the labor movement. The bill was withdrawn by Congress last January 22 on the trivial excuse that it should be effective by January 2007 and not October 2006. The bill's withdrawal is in line with the wishes of Malacañang, monopoly capitalists and big bourgeois compradors who are opposed to any significant wage hike.

Students rally against AFP

NUMEROUS student leaders rallied in front of the Philippine Normal University (PNU) in Manila last March 5 to protest an AFP forum in the PNU that obstinately tried to link militant youth organizations to the CPP and NPA.

The AFP forum accused Anakbayan, National Union of Students of the Philippines, League of Filipino Students, College Editors Guild of the Philippines and Student Christian Movement of the Philippines as front organizations of the communist movement.

The soldiers presented in their forum a certain Ka Lina who was supposedly a former NPA guerrilla and member of Anakbayan. Anakbayan chair Eleanor de Guzman rose from the audience and said she does not recognize Ka Lina. At that point, the AFP forum fell in shambles and was not able to continue.

Earlier, at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), students were able to videotape an AFP forum. The forum was also disrupted after student leaders stood up and challenged the military's false accusations.

Senator Madrigal appeals to the UN on Anti-Terrorism Act

SEN. Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal formally requested the intervention of the United Nations regarding the passage of the antipeople and fascist Anti-Terrorism Law. The law was signed by Gloria Arroyo last March 6.

Madrigal said that the US-Arroyo regime will use the Anti-Terrorism Law (now called the Human Security Act) against the people. With this law, the country can again be put under martial law conditions, she said. The law's atrocious provisions include wiretapping, warrantless arrest, seizure of bank accounts and other abuses that may be used against suspects.

Senator Madrigal raised her objections against the law in an audience with UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston when he visited the country. Madrigal will also deliver an appeal to the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights in Geneva and its Special Rapporteur for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

It will be recalled that Madrigal and Sen. Mar Roxas voted against the Anti-Terrorism Bill in the Senate.

Senator Madrigal has opposed the Anti-Terrorism Bill from the start. In October 2006, she convened the International Parliamentarians Caucus on Human Rights in the Philippines to request their support to block the proposed bill.

She also spoke personally with members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines on this matter.